Ho Chi Minh's Career and How He Worked With Chennault. Page Two

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Chiang's Secret War Plan

The Red River delta in northern Indo-China, and its port of Haiphong, is the natural outlet to the sea of the adjoining provinces of South and Southwest China. It was for centuries a Chinese sphere of influence until the French ousted the Chinese from the area about 70 years ago. Its strategic importance was enhanced by the construction of the French railroad line from Haiphong to Kunming in the Southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan. Before the war, after the fall of Canton, this railroad became Chiang's life-line until it was shut off by the French in their anxiety to appease the Japanese. After the war, one of the conditions for Chinese withdrawal from Northern Indo-China was the establishment of a free port at Haiphong. Only last week a reliable source in Tokyo reported that Communist China had secretly sounded the French on a settlement which would involve recognition of Peiping and the grant to it of the right freely to use the railway system, the Red River and the port of Haiphong.

Chiang's strategic dream is to reverse the historic pattern and use Haiphong, the railroad and the Red River as his *inlet* to China. Intervention in the Indo-Chinese civil war would give him a bridgehead on the mainland, a protected landing place, and then a base of operations from which to penetrate Yunnan and Kwangsi provinces. "United action" would provide for the use of his troops. Their task would be to seal off the Chinese border. If this brought the Communist Chinese into the Indo-Chinese war, as it almost certainly would, Chiang's line is that with strong aerial support he might be able to establish himself across the border and begin on the job of "rolling back" the Communists. This grandiose scheme is being sold as a form of "letting Asians fight Asians." It is argued that it would not involve any need for American ground troops, that Chiang would require only logistic naval and air support, and that he could by this means establish a *cordon sanitaire* in the South which would really contain the Communists. So runs the siren song from Formosa.

A Hint Was Enough for London

It was the hint of just such concrete planning rather than the more generalized question of "united action" which led the British so firmly to rebuff Dulles. The plan is unpopular with all sides in the Indo-Chinese dispute. The French, like the British, fear it would be the beginning of what Chiang has all along wanted—a World War III to restore him to power. The French do not in any event relish the idea of handing over the northern part of their colony to the Chinese pretender. The Vietnamese—right and left—had their fill of Chiang during the period in which his troops occupied the territory north of the Sixteenth parallel. One reason Ho is said to have accepted the Hanoi agreement of March 1946 for a Vietnamese Republic within the French Union, with temporary re-entry of French troops, was so he could get rid of the Chinese, whom the Annamites have long regarded somewhat as Poles do the Russians and Irish do the British. Both sides in Vietnam seem to oppose "internationalization" of the conflict and to oppose partition as only another way of setting the stage a la Korea for international conflict at their expense.

Chiang's scheme is making headway in Washington, despite its obvious dangers. Secretary of Defense Wilson, who is a moderating influence, has been persuaded to visit Formosa soon to judge for himself the capability of Chiang's troops. Dulles and Radford in the Administration, Nixon and Knowland in Congress, are strongly in favor of such an adventure. Eisenhower is being drawn weakly along in tow. His statement to Senator Flanders that "no military operation would be undertaken alone unless it had the support of the people of the region—unless we were fighting for them" has been misconstrued as reassuring. On the contrary, it envisages American intervention without Western aid if it had "the support of the people of the region." What is the region? Obviously not East Asia as a whole, which opposes intervention. Is it hoped that an "independent" Bao Dai, with French control cast off, may gravitate to the American orbit and call for "help?" What is the restive Syngman Rhee supposed to do if Chiang's troops and America's planes go into action in the South? Resumption of the Korean war would suit his temperament and the necessities of such a conflict—providing, of course, he did not collapse if left to hold his front alone.

Only Way to "Stop Communism"

The liberals who write lugubriously of Dulles's defeat at Geneva as some kind of national catastrophe ought to have their noggins examined. The revolt against the reckless and faltering leadership of Washington is the one hope not only of world peace but, if we must use invidious phrases, of "halting the march of Cummunism in Asia." For it is only by recognizing Communist China and ending the hopeless attempt to squelch native aspiration in French Indo-China that stability may be restored and a firm line drawn, not for war but for peace and co-existence. It is only on such a basis that the great Asian neutrals may be led to underwrite and stabilize a settlement. This is London's perspective, but here the liberals quail at uttering such suspect words as "compromise," "negotiation," "coexistence" and "peace." With few exceptions, as the hasty defeat of the Coudert amendment last week showed, only rightists dare to speak up for military non-involvement and diplomatic sobriety.

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Long Secret State Dept. Report Reveals That in World War II

Ho Chi Minh Worked With Chennault to Rescue U.S. Fliers

In the Library of Congress we came across a mimeographed once secret State Department intelligence report (UB 250.-U33) on Indo-China, dated October 25, 1945, declassified in 1947. We reprint major portions for the light it throws on the remarkable career of Ho-Chi-Minh and for its tantalizing glimpse of the cooperation between Ho and Chennault in rescuing American fliers during the war, and between Ho and an unidentified American group against the Japanese. The report refers to him under his original name, Nguyen-Ai-Quoc, "now known as Ho-Chi-Minh."

Son of a Mandarin

Nguyen-Ai-Quoc is reported by source to be the most experienced and intelligent of the Annamite Nationalist-Communist leaders. Born 1892, he is the son of a mandarin in Nghe-An Province of Annam, where the revolutionary tradition was strong. He received his education in Hue at the famous College Quoc-Hoc. From his earliest childhood (which was said to be not very happy—his father was an alcoholic addict, and later dismissed from his administrative position), he resented the servility of the mandarinate to the French. As a youth, source says, he had a strong desire for knowledge and travel. In 1911 he is said to have left his home in Saigon at the age of nineteen and worked his way around the world. Described as possessing a natural gift for languages, he was able during his peregrinations to learn English in New York, French in Marseille and Russian on Montparnasse (Paris).

In Paris, he practiced several different trades but specialized in photo-finishing. According to source, he lived an austere life, used his savings to buy books and magazines which contained extremist treatments of politico-economic and social questions, and associated with the French Communists . . .

Pleaded for Annam at Versailles

At the end of the First World War, he is said to have drawn up a list of Annamite claims and to have presented it to the Versailles delegates. He founded in Paris the International Union of Colored Peoples . . .

Ai-Quoc was one of the leading exponents of a "new trend" in Communist policy which, after 1923, advocated attacking European countries through their colonies and establishing an alliance with Sun Yat-sen. In 1923 Ai-Quoc went to Moscow as the representative of Indochina to the International Peasant Conference. He remained there several years studying the Bolshevist doctrine and revolutionary methods and associating with Soviet leaders, who were said to respect him for "his remarkable intelligence." When "thoroughly prepared," he was sent to Canton to work in the press bureau of the Soviet consulate. There he said to have founded a branch of the League for Oppressed People, and the Society of Young Revolutionary Annamites, which was the first Communist organization for Annamites in China. In 1926 he published, *Le Procès de la Colonisation Francaise* (Paris) in which he violently attacked colonial policy . . .

Emphasized Nationalism

The orientation Ai-Quoc gave to his program is said to have been nationalistic rather than communistic; he regarded the latter as a subsequent stage. Recognizing the Annamites' love for property and their patriarchal family system, as well as the numerical and intellectual weakness of the proletariat, he planned, according to source, first to assure Annam's independence under a democratic-bourgeois regime and then, by a second step, to integrate it into the Soviet Union. Under his direction, syndicates [trade unions] of students and workers were organized, and he founded the Annamite section of the "League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression . . ." In Cochin China he organized syndicates among workers in the Franco-Asiatic Petrol Co., in the arsenal, in the electric plants of Cholon and Saigon. In Tonkin, the workers of the cotton and silk mills of Haiphong and elsewhere were organized. In Annam, the same thing occurred in the railroad companies, the forest service and the schools.

Jailed In Hong Kong

In 1931, when the Communist party was at its period of greatest strength (six years after its birth in Indochina), it numbered 1,500 members with 100,000 affiliated peasants. Ai-Quoc was termed its "founder, mentor and savior." That same year, however, he was arrested in Hong Kong, reportedly through the cooperation of the British police on 6 June . . . He escaped from Hong Kong to Canton . . . However, shortly thereafter he passed through Hong Kong on his way to Saigon. This time he was arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment. He made an appeal to London, and while awaiting its result, he was held at the prison hospital because of his precarious health. Source says he was cared for in prison with a devotion that can only be attributed to the fear that his death (he was very ill with tuberculosis) would make him into a popular martyr . . .

Another source reports that after his prison sentence, Ai-Quoc was released through the efforts of Mr. Loownsby, an English attorney. Under the name of Ho-Chi-Minh he went to Fukien where he stayed some months, then to Shanghai, and finally back to Indochina. During his imprisonment and thereafter until 1942, he and the League were active underground. In this year, he went to China as the representative of the Viet-Minh League. Immediately upon crossing the frontier, he was imprisoned by the Chinese for 13 months.

Worked With Gen. Chennault

After his release at Liuchow, he went to Kunming to contact the Chinese and Americans, and his own underground organization. While there, he did some translating for the Office of War Information. From Kunming, after having been in contact with General Chennault, he flew to Poseh and went from there with an AGAS team to Caobang. He worked with this team and its organization, establishing a network all over Tonkin Province to aid American pilots who were forced down in French Indochina. This work continued until the end of the war, but an additional American group worked with him against the Japanese in July 1945 . . .

Ai-Quoc was reported by Paris newspapers on 2 September 1945 to have assumed the title of President of the Viet-Nam Republic, following the abdication of Bao Dai, Emperor of Annam . . . On 17 September Ai-Quoc was quoted as saying that his government is willing to accept "even French advice, so long as the French come as friends and not as conquerors." . . .

According to De Gunzberg, representative of the French press, and Thorpe, of the Associated Press, who have had interviews with him, Ai-Quoc made a favorable impression upon them. He appears to be a sincere and capable man. Jean Dorsenne in *Le Peril Rouge en Indochine*, gives his physical description as follows: "Ai-Quoc has the appearance of a Russian nihilist; he has a high and well-formed forehead; his deep-set eyes are soft and reflect the incurable melancholy so natural in certain types of Dostoyevsky; his high and hollow cheeks reveal the inner flame and are feverishly colored; a line of bitterness deforms somewhat his mouth." Another source describes him as "mystic and ascetic." All sources, however, agree he has a remarkable degree of organizing ability. . . .

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The Week in Washington

Best news of the week was the order handed down by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals here against the Attorney General in the National Lawyers' Guild case. The decision was by two conservative members of the Circuit bench, Wilbur K. Miller and Prettyman. It will force Brownell to hold up his kangaroo court proceedings for putting the Guild on his subversive list while the courts pass on the Guild's contention that the Attorney General has no lawful power to draw up such a list anyway.

The Attorney General's list, begun privately by Francis Biddle, made public by Tom Clark, has become an American Index used in ever wider circles to deny employment to persons suspected of subversive association, whatever that means. Only a few days ago it was announced that insurance agents in the District of Columbia would have to obtain loyalty clearance; the list figures in this. Earlier listings were made by the Attorneys General without hearings of any kind. In belated response to a Supreme Court decision of several years ago Brownell set up ersatz hearings like that in loyalty proceedings. Interminable interrogatories must be answered (under penalty for false statement) to qualify for the hearing and in this there is no right to know the exact charges or to examine accusing witnesses.

The ever widening tendency to exclude men from professions and employment was touched on in a little noticed dissent by Douglas and Black the other day from a Supreme Court order upholding the interstate compact by which New York and New Jersey govern the employment of longshoremen. Conviction for a crime, affiliation with Communists or being held "a danger to the public peace or safety" is enough to debar one from employment. The order does not foreclose constitutional challenge later, but Douglas and Black felt the terms should be "tested at the very threshold."

Herbert Brownell's unscrupulous manipulation of falsehood and melodrama in his attacks on the Left were again exemplified this week by the way the Department of Justice launched its action before the Subversive Activities Control Board to have the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade listed as a Communist front under the Internal Security (McCarran) Act of 1950. This hounded mutual aid organization representing that brave handful of men who fought Fascism in Spain will some day again be accorded the respect it deserves. The Department came up with the headline-catching floozie that the real purpose of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade was to train Communist soldiers for "der Tag" in this country!

Another bit of Brownelliana: In a plea for wiretap legislation on March 18 (as readers will recall) the Attorney General said "When they will next strike, who will be their victim, what valuable government secret will be the subject of a new theft . . . these are all matters that Communist agents talk about over telephones today." But browsing through the 1955 Justice Department budget hearings before the House Appropriations Committee we came across (pages 162-3) this testimony of J. Edgar Hoover, "The security measures which the Communist party have taken in order to thwart the efforts of the FBI have been many and detailed in character . . . The use of the telephone and telegraph is avoided . . . They communicate through couriers and avoid the use of written communications." Brownell ought to start by tapping Hoover's wires so he could get his facts straight.

The Senate's investigating committee in the McCarthy-Army row ought to summon J. Edgar Hoover to testify about the mysterious letter suddenly produced by McCarthy. From the queasy disclaimer given by Hoover to a committee aide, it is clear that McCarthy's document is substantially a copy or summary of a letter sent by Hoover in January 1951 to the then Army Intelligence Chief about "dangerous" security conditions at Fort Monmouth. Since extensive inquiry has failed to turn up even a "Fifth Amendment" case at Fort Monmouth, the document would seem to reflect an unflattering light on FBI processes. It is useful to recall at this point that the Mrs. Annie Lee Moss case also involved a letter by Hoover to Army intelligence warning that this poor woman was a security risk and that the committee hearings, like the Army's, weighed Mrs. Moss's word against those of Mrs. Markward, Hoover's informer, and found in favor of Mrs. Moss. We have long thought there was an undercover feud between FBI and Army Intelligence in which McCarthy was being used. It is a pity there is no one on the Senate committee (or anywhere else in Washington) with the nerve to question Hoover about the leak to McCarthy of FBI material damaging to the Army.

As for the McCarthy circus itself (watching the TV is becoming a morbid national affliction) the important thing is not so much what happens in Washington as in the minds of the beholders around the country. Since we have subscribers in every State of the Union, we'd like to make our own informal survey. Would readers kindly send us what information they have on public reaction in their area for a roundup story? If you have a suppressed desire to be a reporter, here's your chance.

Mexicans, who have fewer votes and therefore fewer rights even than Negroes in this country won a victory in the Supreme Court last week when a unanimous ruling by Chief Justice Warren in the *Hernandez* case (see the *Weekly* for last January 18) reversed the conviction of a Mexican for murder because there were no Mexicans on the jury. This is a blow to Anglo-Saxon white supremacy in its stronghold, Texas.

The weakness of anti-war sentiment in Congress may be seen in the swift and summary defeat (377-58) of the Coudert amendment to the defense appropriation bill which would have forbade the President to use American troops abroad (except in self-defense or fulfilment of existing treaty obligations) without a vote of Congress. The mood of most members: they don't want to take responsibility either for war or for measures to safeguard peace. A liberal Republican, Javits (N.Y.) led the fight against Coudert and only one liberal Democrat (Condon of California) had the nerve to support Coudert in the debate. (Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., made a long speech that same day on the need for giving more milk to soldiers—to sop up the milk surplus—but was silent on this anti-war amendment.) Only an ultra-conservative like the New York corporation lawyer, Coudert, dares fight war involvement these days; the liberals are too scared. Remembering the Rapp-Coudert witch hunt in the New York schools, some teachers may have noted wryly that colleagues have gotten into trouble for sentiments less radical than those Coudert himself voiced—to his credit—last week.

Clairvoyant remark as the Taft-Hartley debate begins in the Senate: "1954 might well be the last chance for a number of years to improve the Taft-Hartley Act"—U.S. Chamber of Commerce Washington Report, April 23, 1894.

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How Vulnerable Are We to Atomic Attack?

Enlightening Session With Wilson and Radford

Mr. CANNON. We were told about two years ago, Mr. Secretary, that if Russia should send over 10 planes carrying atomic bombs, 7 of them would get through . . .

What is the situation now with respect to that? . . .

Secretary WILSON. Admiral Radford is going to appear before you tomorrow, or whenever you want him, and he has a good analysis of the situation—how many we could stop. It would depend partly on the time of day they came. It would depend upon how much warning we had and it would depend upon whether they did it now, or 3 years from now.

I will say this, my analysis would indicate that the Russians have been much more afraid of us than we are of them, and their buildup has been a defensive buildup. . . .

Mr. CANNON. But going back to the real point at issue, whether under modern conditions with the Russians starting 10 planes from a Russian airfield at the time, and under the circumstances they considered most favorable, how many would reach their targets in America?

Secretary WILSON. Well, I would like you to have Admiral Radford answer that question . . . I do not want to get into the category of people who express opinions off the cuff.

Mr. CANNON. To a Secretary of Defense such a vital subject should not be off the cuff . . . You would not say that none would get through?

Secretary WILSON. No, I would not say that. I would rather say that I do not expect the Russians to try in the near future . . .

Mr. CANNON. Then, while you will not say that none of these Russian planes will reach their target, you think fear of retaliation rather than the difficulty of getting through might prevent such an attack?

Secretary WILSON. Yes. But they would lose many bombers and trained crews and I do not believe they could keep it up. IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE THING FOR OUR PEOPLE TO TAKE FOR A WHILE. [Emphasis added.]

This is what happened when Admiral Radford appeared:

Mr. MAHON. The American public is attracted to the spectacular possibility of an atomic blitz. Everybody thinks in those terms . . .

Admiral RADFORD. I would like this answer off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. MAHON. If a Member of Congress goes to his district and makes a speech and yields for questions, which many Members do, one of the very first questions that the audience will ask is, "Congressman, how vulnerable is this country to an atomic attack?"

That is the question that Congress is interested in and the country generally.

What can you say about our vulnerability to atomic attack? I am not saying there is a probability or the likelihood of an atomic attack, but my question is how vulnerable would we be if someone in his foolhardiness, shall we say, should undertake an atomic attack?

Admiral RADFORD. I would like to answer that off the record.

Mr. MAHON. On the other hand, if you could say something on the record that would be appropriate, I think it would be good.

My point is, in World War II, 95 percent of our bombers got through to their targets, I believe. That is a conservative figure. Well, if we should be attacked today, could 95 percent of enemy bombers, under favorable conditions, get through perhaps on a one-way raid? I am trying to get some kind of an over-all estimate.

Admiral RADFORD. Off the record.

Mr. MAHON. I would like for you to discuss the degree of vulnerability of this country to atomic attack, what the possibility would be of enemy planes getting through to their targets, and so forth, in the event of an all-out emergency. I realize that you will have to use discretion in putting certain information on the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

—House Appropriations Committee Hearings on the 1955 Defense Department budget, Pps. 71-3, 139-40.

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